

# **CUNNINGHAM PRESERVATION PROJECT**



## **GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK MOOSE, WYOMING**

**September 19 through October 27, 2006  
FY-06**

### **HISTORIC STRUCTURES RECORD OF TREATMENT**

**National Park Service  
Western Center for Historic Preservation  
Grand Teton National Park  
P.O. Drawer 170  
Moose, Wyoming 83012**

# **Table of Contents**

## **I. COMPLETION REPORT**

1. Accounting
2. Narrative
3. Selected Photographs
4. Recommendations for Future Preservation

## **II. PROJECT HISTORY**

1. Compliance Data
2. Correspondence
3. Miscellaneous

## **III. APPENDIX**

1. Additional Photographs (Provided in a three ring binder)

# Completion Report

**Accounting**

## **Project Narrative**

This report is a statement of preservation work completed at Cunningham Cabin by the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) between September 19 and October 16, 2006. Included as part of the record of treatment are a narrative, costs, correspondence, project photographs and compliance records.

## **Project History**

The preservation of Cunningham Cabin was part of cultural cyclic maintenance. \$25,000 was requested to perform basic preservation applications to maintain the structure in fair condition. A NEPA ESF was filed in February 2006 by former park historian Pam Holtman who was listed with WCHP Manager, Craig Struble, as project supervisor. A specific date to begin work had not been set at this time other than to say that the project would be completed in the summer/fall of 2006. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was also completed by Pam Holtman in April 2006. Prior to commencing work, ground disturbing activities were discussed with park archeologist Jacquelin St. Clair. A preservation crew arrived September 19th to begin work and spent approximately one month on site.

## **Description of Project**

Historically known as Bar Flying U Ranch, Cunningham was homesteaded by Jackson Hole pioneer, Pierce Cunningham, who operated a ranch/farm until the 1940's. The land and buildings were then sold to the Snake River Land Company and later became NPS property. The two-room dogtrot cabin is the only building that remains on the site today. Cunningham Cabin was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Thousands of visitors stop at this site during their trip through the park. Not only does the site have a historical marker that attracts visitors, but its location provides one of the best views of the Tetons for sightseers and photographers. Interpretive handouts at the parking area lead visitors on a self-guided tour through the site and provide information about the Cunninghams and ranching in Jackson Hole.

When the preservation team arrived on site, they assessed the structure and recorded current conditions through observations and photographs. The upper logs of the cabin were in relatively good condition. Very few logs had deteriorated to the point of needing to be removed and the roof was stable under the weight of the sod. However, since its last preservation work in the 1990's, Cunningham Cabin had begun to sink below grade. This was due in part to sill log deterioration, soil movement and also in part to the considerable weight of the sod roof. Additionally, the walls of the north room were starting to lean and create a larger opening between the two rooms. There were two major points of preservation work that needed to be completed. The structure had to be elevated to grade and the walls on the north room of the cabin needed to be realigned to lessen the stress on the dogtrot connecting the two rooms.

To accomplish these preservation measures, the following objectives were set:

1. Divide the structure into two sections and complete work on one room at a time.  
(These rooms were labeled north and south to avoid confusion)
2. Jack and suspend the roofline to enable the crew to work with the walls of the structure without the additional weight
3. Jack and suspend the structure by room to remove and replace sill logs in-kind
4. Create a new foundation using dirt and stone to return the structure to grade level

## **Summary of Work**

The crew began work on site September 19, 2006. The first week was spent preparing the area around the structure. A trench deep enough to allow for room to jack was dug on the interior and exterior of all four elevations of the north room. Project supervisors also began to think about the equipment that would be needed and how to proceed without causing damage to the structure. Several attempts were made in the first week to move the structure, without elevating the roof, and were not successful.

Week two began with a five person crew who started by setting jacks along the purlins of the north room and elevating the roof several inches off the walls. Once the weight of the roof had been lifted, the crew was able to set up additional jacks in the trench to elevate the building off of the sill logs. With the weight of the walls suspended, the sill logs were easily removed and replaced in-kind. Two-inch pipes were placed on the new east elevation sill log to help the building slide during the realignment.

After the new sill logs had been put in place, jacks were used on the exterior of the northeast corner to push the north and east elevations southward several inches. The same was done on the southwest corner to move that side of the building. This task continued into week three with a crew that varied from two to five persons on site on any given day. The north room was complete by the middle of week three and work began on the south room.

Unlike the north, the south room did not need to be moved back into place. However, the sill logs needed to be replaced, so the crew repeated what had been done on the north room by lifting the roof and elevating the walls to get to the sill logs. During this process, the logs on the east elevation began spreading, causing the joints in the structure to move apart. Work was halted until a cable wench could span across the interior of the room to pull the east and west elevations together while the sill logs were being replaced.

The south room of the structure was completed by the end of the third week and all that remained was the finish work. The trenches in both rooms were backfilled with dirt and the chinking was put back into place. When complete, Cunningham Cabin had eight new sill logs, a new foundation and had been raised several inches to grade.

## **Recommendations**

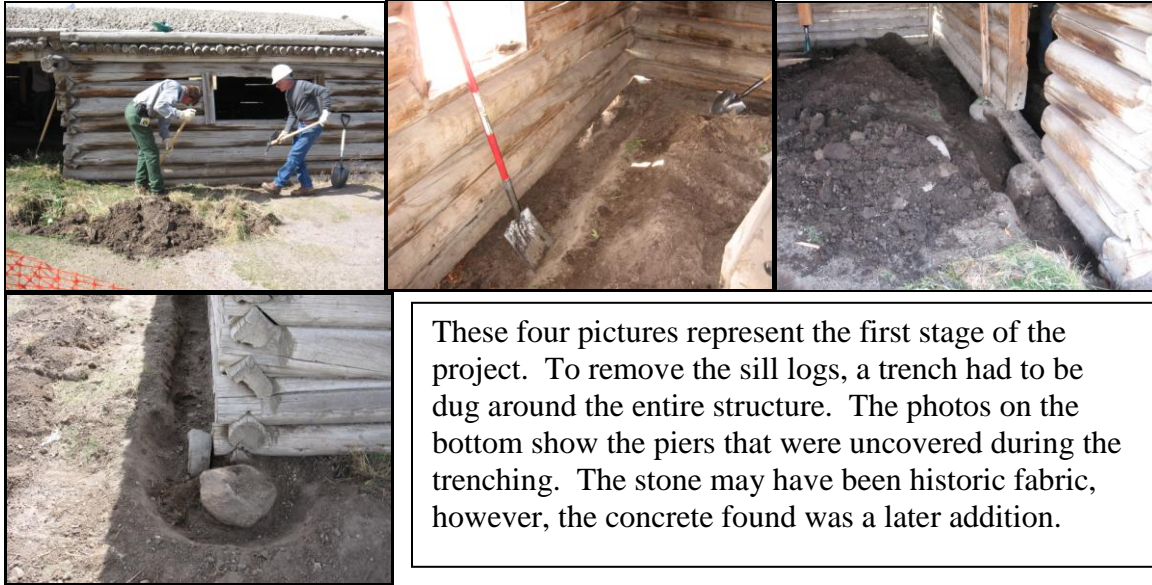
The following preservation measures are recommended for future work to maintain Cunningham Cabin in good condition:

1. The current sod roof is 8-10 of dirt and no longer has an active root system. WCHP recommends that the dirt be removed and replaced with new sod.
2. While the dirt is off the roof, all rafters should be checked for deterioration and replaced in-kind as needed.
3. Replace the plate log on the north elevation of the north building. All plate logs should be checked at this time for deterioration and replaced in-kind as needed.

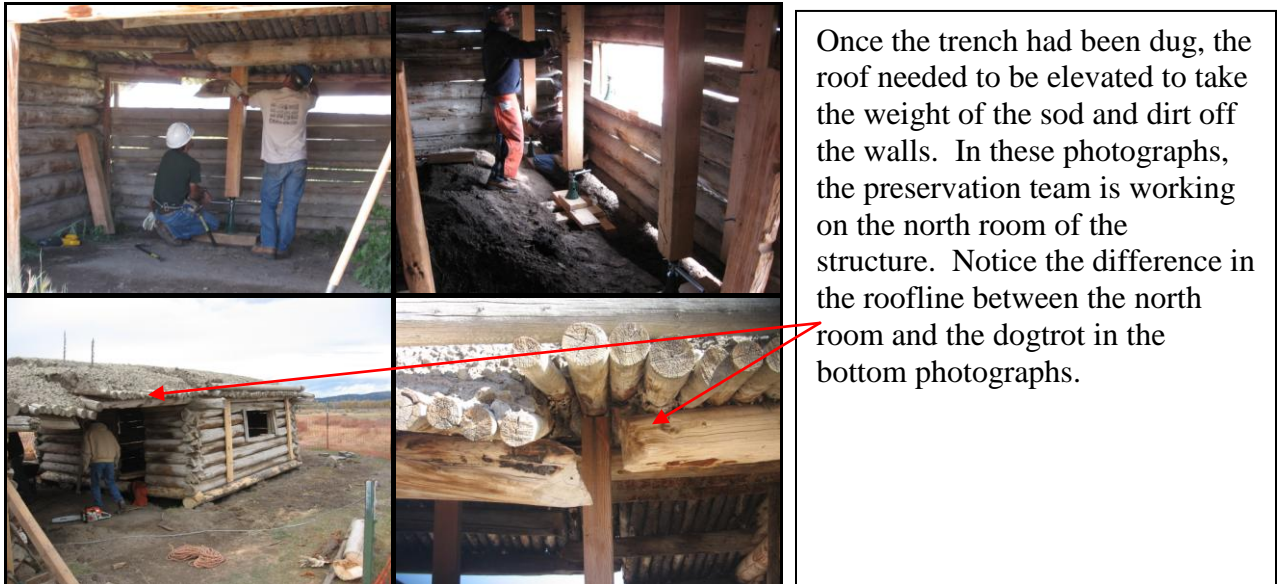
## Selected Photographs

The photographs in this section represent work completed on the north room of the two room cabin in phases. Additional images can be found in the appendix.

### **Phase One: Preparing the Structure**



### **Phase Two: Elevating the Roof**





### Phase Three: Moving the Building



Moving the structure required the several workers. At times, there were two jacks going at once, one person watching the roofline to alert others of possible damage to the structure and another tightening the jacks that supported the posts on the roof as the structure shifted.

The two photographs on the right show the movement of the building vertically and horizontally. In the first photo, the new sill log had been put in place and is supported by new field stone taken from a local source. The second photo shows a movement of approx. 3 inches of the northwest corner of the north room.



### Phase Four: Preparing Sill Logs



All eight sill logs were in need of replacement on Cunningham Cabin. Hand tools were used to peel the logs and create notches. The logs were replaced in-kind.

## Phase Five: Inserting New Sill Logs



All six photos shown here are of the sill logs being replaced in the north room.



South Elevation



East Elevation



North Elevation

## Completed Project:



Main Entrance-East Elevation



North Room-Southeast Elevation



Interior-North Room Southwest Corner